

# COCK AND HARLEQUIN

Notes concerning Music by

JEAN COCTEAU

*Translated from the French by ROLLO H. MYERS*

With a Portrait of the Author and two Monograms

by PABLO PICASSO

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Portrait  
Jean Cocteau

Picasso

1916

Valenciennes  
1940

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to

GEORGES AURIC

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MY DEAR FRIEND,

I ADMIRE the Harlequins of Cézanne and Picasso, but I do not like Harlequin. He wears a black mask and a costume of all the colours. After denying the cock's crow, he goes away to hide. He is a cock of the night.

On the other hand, I like the real cock, who is profoundly variegated. The cock says Cocteau twice and lives on his *own* farm.

Had I not dedicated "Le Cap de Bonne-Espérance" to Garros in captivity, I should dedicate these notes to Garros escaped from Germany. But you are the second friend of mine who has *escaped from Germany*.

I offer them to you because a musician of your age proclaims the richness and grace of a generation which no longer grimaces, or wears a mask, or hides, or shirks, and is not afraid to admire or to stand up for what it admires. It hates paradox and eclecticism. It despises their *smile* and faded elegance. It also shuns the colossal. That is what I call *escaping from Germany*.

Long live the Cock! Down with Harlequin!

J. C.

March 19, 1918.

N.B.—Harlequin also means: "A dish composed of various scraps." (Larousse.)

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T the beginning of every book it would be a good plan to draw up a special glossary by means of which, in assigning to each term its exact value, many misunderstandings of vocabulary would be avoided.

Almost all misunderstandings arise from the quid-pro-quos of vocabulary.

The word SIMPLICITY, which occurs often in the course of these notes, calls for some definition.

Simplicity must not be taken to be the synonym of "poverty," or to mean a retrogression.

Simplicity progresses in the same way as refinement, and the simplicity of our modern musicians is not the same as that of our clavecinists.

The simplicity due to a reaction from refinement benefits from that very refinement—it detaches and condenses the richness acquired.

This book is not concerned with any existing school but with a school to whose existence nothing points—were it not for the first-fruits of a few young artists, the efforts of the painters, and the tiredness of our ears.\*

\*I add here the "Socrates" of Satie which was unknown to me at the moment of writing these lines.

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# COCK & HARLEQUIN

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By JEAN COCTEAU

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RT is science in the flesh.

¶ The musician opens the cage-door to arithmetic; the draughtsman gives geometry its freedom.

¶ A work of art must satisfy all the Muses—that is what I call “Proof by nine.”

¶ A masterpiece is a game of chess won “check-mate.”

¶ A YOUNG MAN MUST NOT INVEST IN SAFE SECURITIES.

¶ Do not confound those unknown worlds which we are continually visiting on unknown feet with the kingdom of dreams. We are not dreamers but realistic explorers.

¶ TACT IN AUDACITY CONSISTS IN KNOWING HOW FAR WE MAY GO TOO FAR.

¶ We must get rid of a Baudelairian prejudice; Baudelaire is bourgeois. The “Bourgeoisie” is the bed-rock of France from which all our artists emerge. They may possibly get clear of it, but it allows them to build dangerously on substantial foundations.

¶ With us, there is a house, a lamp, a plate of soup, a fire, wine and pipes at the back of every important work of art.

¶ Instinct needs to be trained by method; but instinct alone helps us to discover a method which will suit us, and thanks to which our instinct may be trained.

¶ The nightingale sings badly.

¶ In the world of comedians there are conjurors, and they amuse us, but only when their tricks come off. To put a rabbit into a hat and bring out a cage is all right; but to put in a rabbit and take out a rabbit—would this bad conjuror expect to be taken for an artist?

¶ *Royal Families*: Only a sense of hierarchy permits of sound judgement. Amongst works of art which leave us unmoved, there are works which count; one may smile at Gounod's Faust, but it is a masterpiece; one may revolt against Picasso's æsthetic, but recognise its intrinsic value. It is this sense of quality which relates artists belonging to absolutely opposite schools.

¶ After a hundred years everybody is on the best of terms; but one has to do a lot of fighting first in order to gain one's place in the Creators' Paradise.

¶ In feeling his way an artist may open a secret door and never discover that behind this door a whole world lay concealed.

¶ Hence, if he who passes for the high-priest of a school because he founded it should one day shrug his shoulders and disown it with a paternal wink, the school is in no way discredited thereby.

¶ The course of a river is almost always disapproved of by the source.

¶ It is the artist who is really rich. He rides in a motor-car. The public follows in a 'bus. How can we be surprised if it follows at a distance?

¶ THE SPEED OF A RUNAWAY HORSE COUNTS FOR NOTHING.

¶ Be suspicious of M. Prudhomme walking on his hands.

¶ WHEN A WORK OF ART APPEARS TO BE IN ADVANCE OF ITS PERIOD, IT IS REALLY THE PERIOD THAT HAS LAGGED BEHIND THE WORK OF ART.

¶ An artist does not jump upstairs. If he does it is a waste of time, because he will have to walk up afterwards.

¶ An artist who goes backwards betrays nobody. He only betrays himself.

¶ Emotion resulting from a work of art is only of value when it is not obtained by sentimental blackmail.

¶ In art every value which can be proved is vulgar.

¶ Despise the man who wants to be applauded as well as the man who wishes to be hissed.

¶ WE SHOULD BE MEN DURING OUR LIFETIME AND ARTISTS FOR POSTERITY.

¶ Truth is too naked; she does not inflame men.

¶ A sentimental scruple which prevents us from speaking the whole truth makes us represent Venus hiding



her sex with her hand. But truth points to her sex with her hand.

¶ Satie said: "I want to write a play for dogs, and I have got my scenery. The curtain goes up on a bone." Poor dogs! It is their first play. Afterwards they will be shown more difficult ones, but it will always come back to the bone in the end.

¶ Every "Long live So-and-So" involves a "Down with So-and-So". One must have the courage to say this "Down with So-and-So" or be convicted of eclecticism.

¶ Eclecticism is fatal to admiration as well as to injustice. But in art, it is a kind of injustice to be just.

¶ It is hard to deny anything, above all a noble work of art. But every sincere affirmation involves a sincere negation.

¶ Beethoven is irksome in his developments, but not Bach, because Beethoven develops the form and Bach the idea.

Beethoven says: "This penholder contains a new pen; there is a new pen in this penholder; the pen in this penholder is new"—or "Marquise, vos beaux yeux, etc."

Bach says: "This penholder contains a new pen in order that I may dip it in the ink and write," etc., or "Marquise, vos beaux yeux me font mourir d'amour, et cet amour . . . etc."

There lies the difference.

¶ One is sometimes bound to defend those of whom one does not approve. For example, how can one help defending Strauss against those who attack him from pure Germanophobia or in favour of Puccini?

¶ A modified revival of the mysteries of Eleusis would free art from all prostitution. The worst tragedy for an artist is to be admired through being misunderstood.

¶ There is a moment when every work in the process of being created benefits from the glamour attaching to uncompleted sketches. "Don't touch it any more!" cries the amateur. It is then that the true artist takes his chance.

¶ We all have a skin that is sensitive to tziganes and military marches.

¶ SENSES. The ear repudiates but can tolerate certain kinds of music which, if transferred to the sphere of the nose, would oblige us to run away.

¶ The bad music which superior folk despise is agreeable enough. What is disagreeable is their good music.

¶ Beware of the paint, say certain placards. I add: Beware of music.

¶ Look out! Be on your guard, because alone of all the arts, music moves all around you.

¶ Musicians ought to cure music of its convolutions, its dodges and its tricks, and force it as far as possible to keep *in front of the hearer*.

¶ A POET ALWAYS HAS TOO MANY WORDS IN HIS VOCABULARY, A PAINTER TOO MANY COLOURS ON HIS PALETTE, AND A MUSICIAN TOO MANY NOTES ON HIS KEYBOARD.

¶ ONE MUST SIT DOWN FIRST; ONE CAN THINK AFTERWARDS.

¶ This axiom must not serve as an excuse to those who are always sitting down. A true artist is always on the move.

¶ Picturesqueness and especially exoticism are a handicap to musicians and cause them to be misunderstood.

¶ Sculpture, so neglected on account of the current contempt for form and mass in favour of the shapeless, is undoubtedly one of the noblest arts. To begin with, it is the only one which obliges us to move round it.

¶ That bird-catcher and scarecrow over there is a conductor.

¶ The creative artist must always be partly man and partly woman, and the woman part is almost always unbearable.

¶ The public asks questions. It ought to be answered by works, not manifestos.

¶ THE BEAUTIFUL LOOKS EASY. THAT IS WHAT THE PUBLIC SCORNS.

¶ Even when you blame, only be concerned with what is first class.

¶ A sound opinion is always taken for a literary opinion.

¶ What makes optimists of pessimists like ourselves is the intuition that a work of art tends to maintain equilibrium.

¶ I am working at my wooden table, seated on my wooden chair with my wooden penholder in my hand, but this does not prevent me from being in some degree responsible for the courses of the stars.

¶ A dreamer is always a bad poet.

¶ If you are going to shave your head, don't keep a curl for Sundays.

¶ You tell me you have come from Right to Left owing to a passionate conviction, and you have only changed your clothes. You ought to have changed your skin as well.

¶ The important thing is not to swim lightly on the surface, but to disappear heavily and only leave a ripple.

¶ The eyes of the dead are closed gently; we also have to open gently the eyes of the living.



¶ Let us read again Nietzsche's *The Case of Wagner*.

Never have shallower or profounder things been said. When Nietzsche praises "Carmen," he praises the crudity that our generation seeks in the music-hall. It is to be regretted that he compares to Wagner a work of art and one which is inferior to Wagner's work as such.

Impressionist music is outdone, for example, by a certain American dance which I saw at the Casino de Paris.\*

¶ Wagner is played in London; in Paris Wagner is secretly regretted.

¶ To defend Wagner merely because Saint-Saëns attacks him is too simple. We must cry "Down with Wagner!" together with Saint-Saëns. That requires real courage.

\* This was what the dance was like:

The American band accompanied it on banjos and thick nickel tubes. On the right of the little black-coated group there was a barman of noises under a gilt pergola loaded with bells, triangles, boards, and motorcycle horns. With these he fabricated cocktails, adding from time to time a dash of cymbals, all the while rising from his seat, posturing, and smiling vacuously.

Mr. Pilcer, in evening dress, thin and rouged, and Mlle. Gaby Deslys, like a big ventriloquist's doll, with a china complexion, flaxen hair, and a gown of ostrich feathers, danced to this hurricane of rhythm and beating of drums, a sort of tame catastrophe which left them quite intoxicated and blinded under the glare of six anti-aircraft searchlights. The house was on its feet to applaud, roused from its inertia by this extraordinary turn, which, compared to the madness of Offenbach, is what a tank would be by the side of an 1870 state-carriage.

¶ Nietzsche was afraid of certain "ands"—Goethe *and* Schiller, for example, or worse still, Schiller *and* Goethe. What would he say at seeing the spread of the cult of Nietzsche *and* Wagner or rather Wagner *and* Nietzsche!

¶ There are certain long works which are short.

¶ Wagner's works are long works which are long, and *long-drawn-out*, because this old sorcerer looked upon boredom as a useful drug for the stupefaction of the faithful.

It is the same with mesmerists who hypnotise in public. The genuine "pass" which puts to sleep is usually very short and very simple, but they accompany it with a score of sham passes which impress the crowd. The crowd is won by lies; it is deceived by the truth, which is too simple, too naked, and not sufficiently shocking.

¶ I am not attacking modern German music. Schoenberg is a master; all our musicians, as well as Stravinsky, owe something to him, but Schoenberg is essentially a blackboard musician.

¶ The German public has a strong stomach which it stuffs with heterogeneous nourishment which is respectfully absorbed but not digested.

In France this nourishment is refused; but there are four or five stomachs which select and digest better than anywhere else in the world.

¶ Socrates said: "Who is that man who eats bread as if it were rich food and rich food as if it were bread?" Answer: The German melomaniac.

¶ The opposition of the masses to the élite stimulates individual genius. This is the case in France. Modern Germany is dying of approbation, carefulness, application and a scholastic vulgarisation of aristocratic culture.

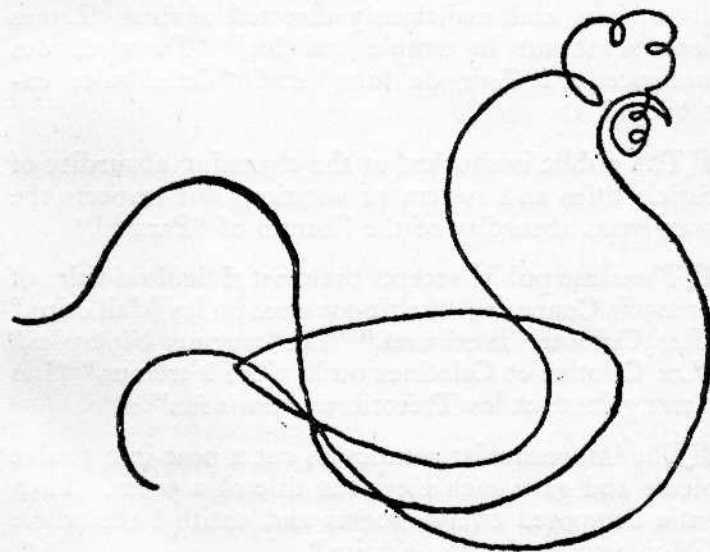
¶ Germany is the type of an intellectual democracy, France of an intellectual monarchy.

¶ With us a young musician from the beginning meets with opposition; in other words, a stimulant. In Germany he finds ears. The longer they are the more they listen. He is taken up, and academised, and that is the end of him.

¶ We must be clear about that misunderstood phrase "German influence." France had her pockets full of seeds and, carelessly, spilt them all about her; the German picked up the seeds, carried them off to Germany and planted them in a chemically-prepared soil from whence there grew a monstrous flower without scent. It is not surprising that the maternal instinct made us recognise the poor spoilt flower and prompted us to restore to it its true shape and smell.

¶ Germany, knowing nothing of indigestion, made known, and drew attention to, the obscure efforts of our young artists because, she said, conservative France allows them to die of starvation.

Apart from the fact that that is both true and normal, since it takes time for one's country to digest new food, the German temptation was dangerous for the young men without a public. And so their theories reached us through German intermediaries, and not only that, but camouflaged, like everything else that Germany borrows. Nothing, we must confess, could at first sight, seem more suspicious.



¶ *SATIE VERSUS SATIE.* The cult of Satie is difficult because one of Satie's charms is that he offers so little encouragement to deification.

¶ One often wonders why Satie saddles his finest works with grotesque titles which mislead the least hostile sections of the public. Apart from the fact that these titles protect his works from persons obsessed by the sublime and provide an excuse for the laughter of those who do not realise their value, they can be explained by the Debussy-ist abuse of "precious" titles. No doubt they are meant as a good-humoured piece of ill-humour, and maliciously directed against "Lunes descendant sur le temple qui fut," "Terrasses des audiences du Clair de lune" and "Cathédrales englouties."

¶ The public is shocked at the charming absurdity of Satie's titles and system of notation, but respects the ponderous absurdity of the libretto of "Parsifal."

¶ The same public accepts the most ridiculous titles of François Couperin: "Le tic-toc choc ou les Maillotins," "Les Culbutes Ixcxbxnxs," "Les coucous bénévoles," "Les Calotins et Calotines ou la pièce à trétous," "Les vieux galants et les Trésorières surannées."

¶ The impressionist composers cut a pear into twelve pieces and gave each piece the title of a poem. Then Satie composed twelve poems and entitled the whole "Morceaux en forme de poire."

¶ Satie acquired a distaste for Wagner in Wagnerian circles, in the very heart of the "Rose-Croix." He warned Debussy against Wagner. "Be on your guard," he said. "A property tree is not convulsed because

somebody comes on to the stage." That is the whole æsthetic of "Pelléas."

¶ Debussy missed his way because he fell from the German frying-pan into the Russian fire. Once again the pedal blurs rhythm and creates a kind of fluid atmosphere congenial to *short-sighted ears*. Satie remains intact. Hear his "Gymnopédies" so clear in their form and melancholy feeling. Debussy orchestrates them, confuses them, and wraps their exquisite architecture in a cloud. Debussy moves further and further away from Satie's starting point and makes everybody follow in his steps. The thick lightning-pierced fog of Bayreuth becomes a thin snowy mist flecked with impressionist sunshine. Satie speaks of Ingres: Debussy transposes Claude Monet "à la Russe."

However, while Debussy was delicately bringing to flower his feminine grace and parading Stéphane Mallarmé in "Le Jardin de l'Infante" (Albert Samain), Satie continued to follow his little classical path. He reaches us to-day as young as any of the "younger" men, having at last found his place after twenty years of modest labour.

¶ When I speak of the "Russian trap" or "Russian influence," I do not mean by that that I despise Russian music. Russian music is admirable because it is Russian music. Russian-French music or German-French music is necessarily bastard, even if it be inspired by a Moussorgsky, a Stravinsky, a Wagner, or a Schoenberg. The music I want must be French, of France.

¶ *SMALL WORKS.* There are certain works of art whose whole importance lies in their depth; the size of their orifice is of small account.

¶ In music, line is melody. The return to design will necessarily involve a return to melody. The profound originality of a Satie provides young musicians with a teaching that does not imply the desertion of their own originality. Wagner, Stravinsky, and even Debussy are first rate octopuses. Whoever goes near them is sore put to it to escape from their tentacles; Satie leaves a clear road open upon which everyone is free to leave his own imprint.

¶ Satie does not pay much attention to painters, and does not read the poets, but he likes to live where life ferments; he has a flair for good inns.

¶ Debussy established once for all the Debussy atmosphere. Satie evolves. Each of his works, intimately connected with its predecessor, is, nevertheless, distinct and lives a life of its own. They are like a new kind of pudding,—a surprise,—and a deception for those who expect one always to keep on treading the same piece of ground.

¶ Satie is the opposite of an improviser. His works might be said to have been completed beforehand, while he meticulously unpicks them, note by note.

¶ Satie teaches what, in our age, is the greatest audacity, simplicity.

¶ Has he not proved that he could refine better than any one? But he clears, simplifies, and strips rhythm naked.

¶ Is this once more the music on which, as Nietzsche said, "the spirit dances," as compared with the music "in which the spirit swims"?

¶ Not music one swims in nor music one dances on;  
MUSIC ON WHICH ONE WALKS.

"De la musique avant toute chose  
Et pour cela préfère le pair,  
Plus lourd et moins soluble dans l'air  
Avec tout en lui qui pèse et qui pose.

Il faut surtout que tu n'aïlles point  
Choisir tes mots avec quelque méprise,  
Rien de moins cher que la chanson grise  
Où l'imprécis au précis se joint."

¶ The impressionists feared bareness, emptiness, silence. Silence is not necessarily a hole; you must use silence and not a stop-gap of vague noises.

¶ *BLACK SHADOW*. Black silence. Not *violet* silence, interspersed with *violet shadows*.

¶ *YOUTHFULNESS*. Nothing is so enervating as to lie and soak for a long time in a warm bath. Enough of music in which one lies and soaks.

¶ Enough of clouds, waves, aquariums, water-sprites, and nocturnal scents; what we need is a music of the earth, every-day music.

¶ Enough of hammocks, garlands, and gondolas; I want some one to build me music I can live in, like a house.

¶ A friend tells me that, after New York, Paris houses seem as if you could take them in your hands. "Your Paris," he added, "is beautiful because she is built to fit men." Our music must also be built to fit men.

¶ Music is not all the time a gondola, or a race-horse, or a tight-rope. It is sometimes a chair as well.

¶ A Holy Family is not necessarily a Holy family; it may also consist of a pipe, a pint of beer, a pack of cards and a pouch of tobacco.

¶ In the midst of the perturbations of French taste and exoticism, the café-concert remains intact in spite of Anglo-American influence. It preserves a certain tradition which, however crapulous, is none the less racial. It is here, no doubt, that a young musician might pick up the thread lost in the Germano-Slav labyrinth.

¶ THE CAFÉ-CONCERT IS OFTEN PURE;  
THE THEATRE IS ALWAYS CORRUPT.

¶ Certain master-pieces of the theatre are not strictly speaking "theatrical," but are rather scenic symphonies which allow nothing to be sacrificed to decoration. For example: "Boris Godounov."

¶ Let us keep clear of the theatre. I regret to have felt its temptation and to have introduced to it two great artists. (Naturally, I do not regret it because of the scandal; the full realisation of my idea would have created the same scandal. But we are here developing in an atmosphere where the public, a hundred years behind the times, cannot possibly be taken into consideration). "Well, then, why do you write for the theatre?" That is precisely the weak point about the theatre; it is forced to depend, for its very existence, upon immediate successes.

¶ When I say that I prefer certain circus or music-hall turns to anything given in the theatre, I do not mean that

I prefer them to anything that might be given in the theatre.

¶ The music-hall, the circus, and American negro-bands, all these things fertilise an artist just as life does. To turn to one's own account the emotions aroused by this sort of entertainment is not to derive art from art. These entertainments are not art. They stimulate in the same way as machinery, animals, natural scenery, or danger.

¶ This life force which is expressed on the music-hall stage makes, at first sight, all our audacities appear old-fashioned. This is because art is slow and circumspect in its blindest revolutions. There, there are no scruples; you jump upstairs.

¶ A LIGHT STEP PRODUCED BY HEAVY FEEDING. Much fun has been made of an aphorism of mine quoted in an article in the *Mercure de France*: "An artist must swallow a locomotive and bring up a pipe."

¶ I meant by this that neither painter nor musician should make use of the spectacle afforded by machinery in order to render their art mechanical, but should make use of the measured exaltation aroused in them by that spectacle in order to express other things of a more intimate kind.

¶ Machinery and American buildings resemble Greek art in so far as their utility endows them with an aridity and a grandeur devoid of any superfluity.

But they are not art. The function of art consists in seizing the spirit of the age and extracting from the con-



temptation of this practical aridity an antidote to the beauty of the Useless, which encourages superfluity.

¶ We may soon hope for an orchestra where there will be no caressing strings. Only a rich choir of wood, brass and percussion.

¶ I should not be averse from substituting for the cult of St. Cecilia that of St. Polycarpe.

¶ It would be a fine thing for a musician to compose for a mechanical organ, a veritable sound-machine. We should then hear properly employed, the rich resources of this apparatus which are now lavished, haphazard, upon hackneyed tunes.

¶ I should like this composer to imagine a steam roundabout with Louis XIV Pegasus-chargers, done in ripolin, pirouetting in a coach royally bedecked with mirrors, lights and cloth of gold.

¶ *CONCERNING A CERTAIN ACROBATIC TENDENCY.* Our musicians have avoided the Wagnerian torrent on a tight-rope, but a tight-rope cannot be considered, any more than a torrent, as a respectable mode of locomotion.

¶ *MUSICAL BREAD* is what we want.

¶ For the last ten years Chardin, Ingres, Manet and Cézanne have dominated European painting, and the foreigner comes to us to put his racial gifts to school with them. Now I proclaim to you that French music is going to influence the world.

¶ In "Parade" I attempted to do good work, but whatever comes into contact with the theatre is corrupted. The luxurious setting characteristic of the only Euro-

pean impresario who was sufficiently courageous and sufficiently interested to accept our work, circumstances in general, and fatigue, made me unable to realise my piece which remains, as it stands, in my opinion, an open window through which may be had a glimpse of what the modern theatre ought to be.

¶ The score of "Parade" was meant to supply a musical background to suggestive noises, such as sirens, typewriters, aeroplanes, and dynamos, placed there like what Georges Braque so aptly calls "facts." Material difficulties and hurried rehearsals prevented these noises from materialising. We suppressed them nearly all. In other words, the piece was played incomplete and without its principle *clou*.

Our "Parade" was so far from being what I could have wished that I never went to see it from the "front," confining myself to adjusting with my own hands, from the wings, the notice-boards bearing the number of each "turn." The Managers' step-dance, amongst others, rehearsed without Picasso's "carcasses" lost all its lyric force as soon as the "carcasses" were put on the dancers.

¶ The horse, a kind of thundering Pegasus, having been rehearsed by the two dancers without their costumes, became a kind of Charlie Chaplin's nag as soon as the ridiculous saddle-cloth, hurriedly made by the paste-board man at the last moment, was put on. We allowed it to remain because it was too late and we naïvely thought that it would raise a good laugh, "Le rire de Guignol." (The puppet-theatre laugh.)

¶ One day, I was looking at the children's puppet show in the Champs Elysées when a dog came on the stage,



or rather a dog's head, as big in itself as two of the other actors put together. "Look at the monster," said a mother. "It is not a monster, it is a dog," said the little boy.

¶ In the theatre men rediscover the ferocity of children, but they have lost their clairvoyance.

¶ Sick to death of flabbiness, fluidity, superfluity, frills, and all the modern sleight-of-hand, though often tempted by a technique of which he knows the ultimate resources, Satie voluntarily abstained, in order to "model in the block" and remain simple, clear and luminous.

¶ Each of Satie's works is an example of renunciation.

¶ The opposition put forward by Erik Satie consists of a return to simplicity. Moreover, that is the only possible kind of opposition in an age of extreme refinement. The good faith of the critics of "Parade," who thought that the orchestral part was a mere din, can only be explained by the phenomenon of *suggestion*. The word "cubism," wrongly introduced (in order not to lose the habit), *suggested* an orchestra to them.

Otherwise the absolute simplicity of the score of "Parade" renders their indignation inexplicable, though this indignation was to some extent justified by the polyphonic audacity of, for example, the "Sacre du Printemps."

¶ The impressionist musicians thought the orchestra in "Parade" poor, because it had no sauce.

¶ The arrangement of "Parade" for four hands is from beginning to end an architectural masterpiece; that is

what ears accustomed to vagueness and thrills are unable to understand. A fugue comes bustling along and gives birth to the actual melancholy rhythm of the fair. Then come the three dances. Their numerous themes each distinct from the other, like separate objects, succeed one another, without being developed, and do not get entangled. A metronomical unity governs each of these enumerations which are super-imposed upon the simple outlines of each character and upon the imaginative ideas evoked by them.

The Chinaman, the little American girl, and the acrobats, represent varieties of "nostalgia" hitherto unknown, so great is the degree of verisimilitude with which they are expressed. No humbug, no repetition. no underhand caresses, no feverishness or miasma, Satie never "stirs up the bog." His is the poetical imagination of childhood moulded by a master technician.

¶ In "Parade" the public thought that the transposition of the music-hall was a bad kind of music-hall.

¶ The public, so accustomed to the incongruous graces of opera ballets, took the dances based on the familiar gestures of life to be mere grimacing.

¶ In "Parade" I tried to elevate to the stylistic level of the dance the gestures of a music-hall illusionist, of little girls belonging to a race which astounds us in American films, and of circus acrobats.

Each dance represents two months' work.

¶ "A studio joke," said the less severe newspapers.

¶ One day, people will be unwilling to believe what the Press said about "Parade." One paper even accused me

of "erotic hysteria." As a rule the shipwreck scene and that of the cinematographic trembling in the American dance were taken to be spasms of "delirium tremens."

¶ Nothing is more comic than the prejudice about the sublime.

One recalls the picture of Balestrieri. For the majority of artists a work cannot be beautiful without an intrigue of mysticism, love or boredom. Brevity, gaiety, and unromantic melancholy are suspect. The hypocritical elegance of the Chinaman, the melancholy of the Little Girl's steam-boats, the touching simplicity of the Acrobats—all those things which, for the public who saw "Parade," remained a "dead letter," would have pleased them if the acrobat had loved the Little Girl and had been killed by the jealous Chinaman, who had then been killed in his turn by the acrobat's wife—or any other of the thirty-six dramatic combinations.

¶ TRADITION APPEARS AT EVERY EPOCH UNDER A DIFFERENT DISGUISE, BUT THE PUBLIC DOES NOT RECOGNISE IT EASILY AND NEVER DISCOVERS IT UNDERNEATH ITS MASKS.

¶ The "useful" and the "useless" exist in art. The majority of the public does not realise this, since it looks upon art as an amusement.

¶ One ought not to say "panem et circenses," but "circenses panis sunt," or rather "quidam circenses panis sunt."

¶ That which makes the public laugh is not inevitably beautiful or new, but that which is beautiful and new inevitably makes the public laugh.

¶ "Cultivate those qualities in you for which the public blames you: they are Thyself." Get this idea well into your head. This advice ought to be written up everywhere like an advertisement of "Pear's Soap." As a matter of fact, the public likes to "recognise" what is familiar. It hates to be disturbed. It is shocked by surprises. The worst that can happen to a work of art is to have no fault found with it so that its author is not obliged to take up an attitude of opposition.

¶ When Baudelaire defended Wagner, it was a case of *aristocratic opposition*. There was no other possible attitude to adopt. All that one can say is that it is a pity that certain epochs can put their great men into a false position.

¶ MISDEAL. Ingres, the revolutionary, *par excellence*; Delacroix, the typical "rapin"; Ingres, the hand; Delacroix, "la patte." Lapse of time brings more clearly into relief the rich bazaar of Delacroix, the architecture of Ingres. The scorn of some of the younger school for Satie's classicism and his respect for the "Schola Cantorum" reminds one of this strange misdeal. Beware of music *à la Delacroix*; never forget that Ingres did not have his own public. He saw his own public running after Delacroix, and remained at the height of his fame, a great innovator, but unrecognised.

¶ The public, accustomed to redundancy, disregards works that are terse.

¶ To the musical public terseness signifies emptiness, and stuffing prodigality.

¶ The longer an artistic expression will last, the fuller and denser it will be, compact like an egg, and the more it will facilitate surface-trickery.

¶ The public does not like dangerous profundities; it prefers surfaces. That is why, when an artistic expression appears to it to be suspect, it leans towards a belief in trickery.

¶ THE PUBLIC ONLY TAKES UP YESTERDAY AS A WEAPON WITH WHICH TO CASTIGATE TO-DAY.

¶ The indolence of the public:—its armchair and its stomach. The public is ready to take up no matter what new game so long as you don't change it, when once it has learned the rules. Hatred of the creator is hatred of *him who alters the rules of the game.*

¶ PUBLICS. Those who defend to-day by making use of yesterday, and who anticipate to-morrow (1 per cent.).

Those who defend to-day by destroying yesterday, and who will deny to-morrow (4 per cent.).

Those who deny to-day in order to defend yesterday (which is their to-day) (10 per cent.).

Those who imagine that to-day is a mistake, and make an appointment for the day-after-to-morrow (12 per cent.).

Those of the day-before-yesterday who defend yesterday in order to prove that to-day exceeds legitimate bounds (20 per cent.).

Those who have not yet learnt that art is continuous and believe that art stopped yesterday in order to go on again, perhaps, to-morrow (60 per cent.).

Those who are equally oblivious of the day-before-yesterday, yesterday, and to-day (100 per cent.).

¶ There are people who are considered quite intelligent but who do nothing but lean towards good things. Their heads get near, but the rest of them remains rooted.

¶ An unfinished work flatters the public because it finds it can make something out of it. It detests a finished work against which it bruises itself and from which it feels itself pitifully excluded.

¶ Superior folk have discovered the word "stylization" to describe everything which is lacking in style.

¶ THE EXTREME LIMIT OF WISDOM IS WHAT THE PUBLIC CALLS MADNESS.

¶ In Paris everyone wants to be an actor; no one is content to be a spectator. People jostle each other on the stage, and the auditorium remains empty.

¶ "Why do you do these things?" asks the public.

"Because you would not do them," answers the creator.

¶ TO PLEASE, AND TO RETAIN ONE'S MERIT. If an artist yields to the public's overtures of peace, he is beaten.

¶ The danger of the "Case of Wagner" lies in the fact that it is an idiot who flings it in your face. There are truths which can only be said after one has acquired the right to say them.

¶ "Look"—said a lady to her husband, in front of one of Claude Monet's cathedrals—"that's futurism." And she added: "It looks like a melting ice-cream." In this case the lady spoke the truth, but she had not acquired the right to do so.

¶ There are profound fashions as well as frivolous ones. A musician must submit to these fashions or else create one according to his taste. Every masterpiece having once been in the fashion goes out of fashion, and long afterwards finds an everlasting equilibrium. Generally it is when it is out of fashion that a masterpiece appeals to the public.

¶ In art anecdote is nothing, *except for the artist*. "Shall we buy a Venice or a pot of flowers?" asked a couple once. This tale makes you laugh, but nearly everybody thinks like that.

• ¶ A favourite phrase of the public is:—"I don't see what that's meant to be."

¶ The public wants to understand first and feel afterwards.

¶ "Show me a fine work of your school and I shall be convinced." Thus speaks Mr. de la Palisse.

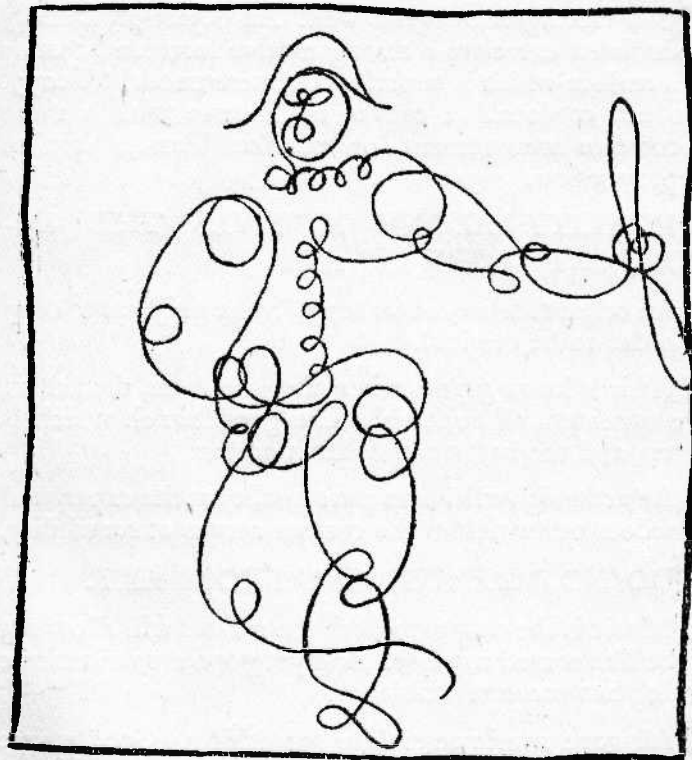
¶ A fall makes people laugh. The mechanism of falling plays an important part in causing the laughter which greets a new work. The public, not having followed the curve which leads up to this work, stumbles suddenly from where it was standing down on to the work which it is now seeing or hearing. Consequently a fall takes place, and laughter.

¶ A short phrase quickly spoken and full of meaning traverses the brain like a surgeon's lancet. Ten minutes later it is no longer there.

¶ If it has to choose who is to be crucified, the crowd will always save Barabbas.

¶ To listen with all her skin is what a timid hind does; I prefer to listen with all my ears.

¶ *REAL SENSITIVENESS*. Music threw St. Douceline into extraordinary ecstasies. One day when out for a walk: "How beautifully that bull-finch sings!" said she, and fainted away.





¶ Resemblance is an objective force which resists all subjective transmutations. Do not confound resemblance with analogy.

¶ An artist who has the sense of reality must never be afraid of being lyrical. The objective world preserves its force in his works, no matter how it may have been transformed by the lyrical element.

¶ Our intelligence digests well. An object profoundly assimilated exercises a strong motive force and results in a realism which is superior to a mere unfaithful copy. Do not confound a canvas by Picasso with a mere decorative arrangement, or mistake "Parade" for an improvisation.

¶ REALITY ALONE MOTIVES THE IMPORTANT WORK OF ART.

¶ An original artist *cannot* copy. So he only has to copy in order to be original.

¶ If birds know grapes when they see them, then there are two sorts of bunches. The good bunch which is eaten, and the bad which is left uneaten.

¶ An art which cultivates pure quality at the expense of anecdote never tickles the coarser nerves of sensibility.

¶ DO NOT DERIVE ART FROM ART.

¶ Music is the only art which the masses will allow not to be like something else. And yet good music is music which has some resemblance.

¶ All good music resembles something. Good music arouses emotion owing to its mysterious resemblance to the objects and feelings which have motivated it.

¶ If the musician has no *idea* to work on, his music is nil. But for him to be working on a certain idea and for his sincerest admirer to discover in his work another idea, does not in the least detract from the value of his work or the worth of the admiration he has earned.

¶ Resemblance in music does not consist in representation, but in the strength of a dissembled truth.

¶ ARCHITECTS. One may find fault with the colour of the rooms, but what does that matter if the house is solidly built and lacks nothing from top to bottom?

¶ One has been accustomed too long to the charm of the mere scaffolding. We architects demolish the scaffolding as soon as the house is built.

¶ Impressionism has fired its last fine fireworks at the end of a long fête. It is up to us to set the rockets for another fête.

¶ One does not blame an epoch; one congratulates oneself on not having belonged to it.

¶ To be on one's guard against a decadent movement is not to deny the individual value of its artists.

¶ Impressionism is a reaction from Wagner. The last reverberation of the storm.

¶ The impressionist school substitutes sunshine for light, and sonority for rhythm.

¶ Debussy played in French, but used the Russian pedal.

¶ Of course Wagner is "good" and Debussy is "good." We are only discussing what is "good." Needless to say that Saint Saëns, Bruneau and Charpentier are very bad.

¶ "What a crowd of false disciples there is around a Picasso, a Braque, a Stravinsky or a Satie, who discredit them!" Such is the opinion of the impressionist. No doubt he forgets the Autumn Salon, and Melisande's hair-splitting.

¶ "Pelléas" is another example of music to be listened to with one's face in one's hands. All music which has to be listened to through the hands is suspect. Wagner is typically music which is listened to through the hands.

¶ One cannot get lost in a Debussy mist as one can in a Wagner fog, but it is not good for one.

¶ The theatre corrupts everything, even a Stravinsky. I should not like this paragraph to affect our faithful friendship, but it is useful to put our young compatriots on their guard against the Caryatides of the Opera—those stout golden syrens who caused even so formidable a ship to change its course. I consider the "Sacre du Printemps" a masterpiece, but I discern in the atmosphere created by its execution a religious complicity existing amongst the initiated, like the hypnotism of Bayreuth. Wagner wanted the theatre; Stravinsky finds himself involved in it by circumstances. There is a difference. But even though he composes *in spite of* the theatre, the theatre has none the less infected him with its microbes. Stravinsky gets at us by other means than Wagner; he does not try to hypnotise us or plunge us in a semi-darkness; he hits us deliberately over the head and in the heart.

How can we defend ourselves? We set our teeth. We feel cramps like those of a tree which grows in jerks *with all its branches*. There is even in the very speed of this

sublime growth something theatrical. I do not know if I make myself clear; Wagner cooks us slowly; Stravinsky does not give us time to say "Ouf!"; but both of them upset our nerves. This is music which comes from the bowels; an octopus from which you must flee or else it will devour you. It is the fault of the theatre. There is theatrical mysticism in "Le Sacre." Is not this music which one listens to with one's face in one's hands?

¶ When I wrote "Le Potomak," I could not see it clearly owing to my disordered state. Stravinsky helped me to shake it off as a charge of cheddite liberates the ore. Now that I have emerged from my black mood, I look at it like everyone else.

¶ Stravinsky will get a man out of a quicksand, but he still does not belong to the race of architects. His work is not based on scaffolding—it grows.

¶ *CONCERNING A CERTAIN FRIVOLOUS ATTITUDE.* If you feel you have a missionary's vocation, don't hide your head like an ostrich; go amongst the negroes and fill your pockets with worthless bric-à-brac.

¶ *NEGROES.* It is only by distributing lots of bric-à-brac and imitating the phonograph hard that you will succeed in taming the negroes and making yourself understood.

Then substitute gradually your own voice for the phonograph and raw metal for the trinkets.

¶ Too many miracles are expected of us; I consider myself very fortunate if I have been able to make a blind man hear.



WE HAVE IN OUR KEEPING AN ANGEL  
WHOM WE ARE CONTINUALLY SHOCK-  
ING. WE MUST BE THIS ANGEL'S GUAR-  
DIAN.

Take care to conceal your capacity to work miracles,  
for "if they knew you were a missionary they would  
tear out your tongue and nails." (Secteur calme.)

And the angel of the "Secteur calme" said:

"For if ever thy looks denounce me  
There will be great disorder in the room.  
They will nudge each other with their elbows  
And make signs  
Over their cards  
And evening papers.  
Feign a headache, giddiness, some indisposition—  
Find an excuse which will pass muster,  
And not one which will cause my presence to be felt;  
For you must never be caught  
In 'flagrant délit'  
With me."

## APPENDIX

Fragments from "Igor Stravinsky and the Russian  
Ballet."

(La Noce Massacrée.)

The Collaboration of "Parade."

(Letter published in the *Revue Nord-Sud*.)

# FRAGMENTS FROM "IGOR STRAVINSKY AND THE RUSSIAN BALLET "

(LA NOCE MASSACRÉE.)

I PREFER, myself, a talented childhood which grows up in bad surroundings, takes wrong turnings, spends itself futilely and at length suddenly discovers its error in time to escape the consequences, to a childhood which makes its first "faux pas" on correct paths, and which progresses normally, holding out no hope of startling developments. I except the early flame of genius, sometimes sublime, which dies down again unless the prodigy, combining wisdom with genius, retires in time under some pretext or other. No. Indiscipline and bad taste, those characteristics of youth, preserve qualities which exist in embryo, and which are delivered in due course painfully, delicately, gradually, by spade-work, like a buried Venus.

For this reason, do not regret your mistakes, even public and notorious ones, heavy drags though they be and which do not alleviate the fatigues of the journey towards the Left. One turns round, takes a sponge-down; looks to see where one has come from and is astonished. The chief stumbling-block people put in the way of this Herculean task is ingratitude. One passes through many "milieux" in order to attain to a relative solitude, and these "milieux" reproach one with having shared their table and with having cleared out "on the quiet." The result is the heart suffers much from

a pilgrimage which the world commonly attributes to egoism, disorder and versatility.

And the flower-Maidens! Amongst the most recent flower-Maidens, the most maidenly and the most flowery, I class the Russian Ballet.

I had a presentiment that I should have to find an excuse for my enthusiasm for this Barnum—a last scruple before clearing out “on the quiet.”

It was in 1910. Nijinsky was dancing the “Spectre de la Rose.” Instead of going to see the piece, I went to wait for him in the wings. *There it was really very good.* After embracing the young girl the spectre of the rose hurls himself out of the window . . . and comes to earth amongst the stage-hands who throw water in his face and rub him down like a boxer. What a combination of grace and brutality! I shall always hear that thunder of applause; I shall always see that young man, smeared with grease-paint, gasping and sweating, pressing his heart with one hand and holding on with the other to the scenery, or else fainting on a chair. Afterwards, having been smacked and douched and shaken he would return to the stage, and smile his acknowledgements.

It was in this semi-obscurity, under the moonlight of the lime-lights, that I met Stravinsky.

Stravinsky was then finishing “Petrouchka.” He described it to me in the Casino at Monte Carlo, astonishing those people, whom nothing can astonish, by

his gesticulations, his grimaces, and jewellery fit for a Negro King.

“Petrouchka” was given in Paris on June 13, 1911. I remember the private rehearsal at the Châtelet. The work which, to-day, gives off its whole aroma, at that time withheld it, so much so that it displeased the public.

The “dilettanti,” used to “clichés,” were unable to follow a synthesis of the soul of the Russian people whose melancholy is not expressed in a whine and which goes straight from beginning to end, like a drum-roll.

One or two specialists recognised the master, and gradually the concert-halls consecrated “Petrouchka.” “Petrouchka,” then, was recognised; firstly, on account of the folk-lore it contained; secondly, as a defence against still newer things.

For it is the public’s way to hobble from one work to another, always one behind, adopting what precedes, in order to use it to blame what is going to follow, and never “keeping to the page,” as the expression goes.

We saw very little of Stravinsky until the famous “première” of the “Sacre du Printemps.”

## LE SACRE DU PRINTEMPS

THE "Sacre du Printemps" was given in May, 1913, in a new theatre, untarnished by time, too comfortable and too cold for a public used to emotions at close quarters in the warmth of red velvet and gold. I do not for a moment think that the "Sacre" would have met with a more polite reception on a less pretentious stage; but this luxurious theatre seemed, at first glance, symbolic of the misunderstanding which was confronting a decadent public with a work full of strength and youth. A tired public, reposing amidst Louis XVI garlands, Venetian gondolas, luxurious divans, and cushions of an orientalism for which the "Russian Ballet" must be held responsible. Under such conditions one digests, as it were, in a hammock, dosing; the really New is driven away like a fly; it is disturbing.

The natural trend of bad taste is already marked; but since 1912 a false audacity, tempting some, and mistaken by others, hating both alike, for true audacity, has taken possession of innumerable categories of fashionable æsthetes. "Dilettanti" and "precious" women thought themselves The Thing, and a class made its appearance in the world belonging to no class, neither that of respectable bad taste, for which it was most fitted, nor the one of new ideas, happily out of reach of its attainment. The provinces out-provincialised in the very heart of Paris.

Let us recall the theme of the "Sacre."

*FIRST TABLEAU.* The prehistoric youth of Russia are engaged in springtide games and dances; they worship the earth and the wise elder reminds them of the sacred rites.

*SECOND TABLEAU.* These simple men believe that the sacrifice of a young girl, chosen from amongst all her peers, is necessary in order that spring may recommence. She is left alone in the forest; the ancestors come out of the shadows like bears, and form a circle. They inspire the chosen one with the rhythm of a long drawn-out convulsion. When she falls dead, the ancestors draw near, receive her body and raise it towards heaven. This theme, so simple, so devoid of symbolism—to-day seems to hold a symbol. I see in it the prelude to the war.

It would, perhaps, be of interest to trace the part played by each of the collaborators in the "ensemble" of this work: Stravinsky, musician; Roerich, painter; and Nijinsky, choreographer. We were then, musically, in the hey-day of impressionism. Everyone was trying to find a new way of being vague and indistinct. . . . Then suddenly in the midst of these charming ruins grew up the Stravinsky tree. When all is said and done, the "Sacre" is still a "Fauvist" work, an organised "Fauvist" work. Gauguin and Matisse pay homage to it. But if the backwardness of music as compared to painting, prevented the "Sacre," of necessity, from coinciding exactly with other disturbing elements, it none the less contributed an indispensable dynamitic force. Moreover, it must not be forgotten that Stravinsky's unbroken collaboration with Diaghilev's company and his attentiveness to his wife in Switzerland kept him at a

distance from the centre of things. His audacity was, therefore, quite gratuitous. In brief, the work, as it stands, was, and is, a masterpiece; a symphony, impregnated with a wild sadness, of primitive earth, camp and farmyard noises, fragments of melodies emerging from the depths of time, animal paintings, profound upheavals, the Georgics of a prehistoric age.

Certainly Stravinsky had studied Gauguin's canvases, but, in the process of transformation, the weak decorative register became a colossus. At that time I was not "au courant" with the more trivial factions of the Left; and thanks to my ignorance, I was able to enjoy the "Sacre" to the full, away from the petty schisms and narrow formulae which condemn free values and too often serve to mask a lack of spontaneity.

Roerich is a mediocre painter. On the one hand he designed costumes and scenery for the "Sacre" which were in keeping with the work; on the other hand, he enfeebled it by the softness of his accents. There remains Vaslav Nijinsky. I will show you a phenomenon. . . .

When he is at home—that is to say in the Palace Hôtels where he bivouacks—this young Ariel frowningly examines folios, and revolutionises the grammar of gesticulation. Badly informed, his modern models are not of the best; he makes use of the "Salon d'Automne." Too familiar with the triumph of grace, he rejects it. He seeks systematically the opposite to that to which he owes his fame; in order to escape from old formulae, he hems himself in with new ones. But Nijinsky is a moujik, a Raspoutine; he carries in him that fluid which stirs crowds, and he despises the public (whom he does not refuse to gratify). Like Stravinsky, he metamorphoses into strength the weakness of whatever he

derives his inspiration from; by means of all these atavisms, this absence of culture, this meanness, this *humanity*, he escapes the German danger, the system which desiccates a Reinhart.

I have heard the "Sacre" again without the dances; I ask to see them again. In my recollection, impulse and order are equally balanced in them as in the orchestra. The fault lies in the parallelism of music and movement, in their want of "play," of counter-point. We had the proof that the same chord repeated often tires the ear less than the frequent repetition of the same gesture tires the eye. Laughter was caused by a monotony, as of automata, rather than by the abruptness of the attitudes, and by the abruptness of the attitudes rather than by the polyphony.

The choreographer's work may be divided into two parts. One part dead (*e.g.*, keeping the feet motionless, merely with the idea of contradicting the traditional pose of the "danseuse" "toes out") and one part alive (*e.g.*, the Storm and that dance of the Chosen One, foolish and *naïve*, the dance of an insect, of a hind fascinated by a Boa, of a factory explosion—in fact, the most stupefying spectacle I ever remember having seen in the theatre).

These different elements formed, then, an "ensemble" which was both homogeneous and heterogeneous, and what shortcomings there may have been as regards detail were volatilised and eradicated by sheer force of temperament.

Thus we made the acquaintance of this historic work in the midst of such an uproar that the dancers could no longer hear the orchestra and had to keep time to the



rhythm which Nijinsky, stamping and shouting, was beating in the wings.

After this sketch of what was going to happen on the stage, let us pass through the little iron door to the auditorium. It is packed. A practised eye could discern there all the material for a scandal: a fashionable public, "décolleté," decked with pearls, aigrettes and ostrich plumes; and, rubbing shoulders with tulle gowns and tail-coats, the jackets and head-bands and conspicuous garments of that species of æsthete who acclaims no matter what novelty in season and out of season through detestation of the "dress-circle" (the unintelligent applause of the former being more insufferable than the sincere hisses of the latter). Add to these the musicians of the "feverish" school, a handful of "moutons de Panurge," hesitating between public opinion and the admiration one ought to entertain for the Russian Ballets. And, without insisting further, mention ought to be made of the thousand varieties of snobbism, super-snobbism, anti-snobbism which would require a whole chapter to themselves. A feature of our audience ought to be recorded,—namely, the absence, with one or two exceptions, of the young painters and their masters. An absence due, as I afterwards learnt, in the case of the former, to their ignorance of these functions to which Diaghilev, to whom they were as yet unknown, did not invite them; in the case of the latter, to social prejudices.

This condemnation of luxury, which Picasso professes like a cult, has its merits and demerits. I fling myself upon this cult as upon an antidote, but it may be that it restricts the horizon of certain artists who avoid contact with luxury from motives of envious hatred rather than conviction. In any case, Montparnasse is

still ignorant of the "Sacre du Printemps," and the "Sacre du Printemps," played on the orchestra at the Concerts Monteux, had the same bad reputation amongst artists of the Left as the Russian Ballets; and Picasso heard Stravinsky for the first time with me in Rome, in 1917.

Let us now return to the theatre in the Avenue Montaigne, while we wait for the conductor to rap his desk and the curtain to go up on one of the noblest events in the annals of art. The audience behaved as it ought to; it revolted straight away. People laughed, boo-ed, hissed, imitated animal noises, and possibly would have tired themselves out before long, had not the crowd of æsthetes and a handful of musicians, carried away by their excessive zeal, insulted and even roughly handled the public in the "loges." The uproar degenerated into a free-fight.

Standing up in her "loge," her diadem awry, the old Countess de P. flourished her fan and shouted, scarlet in the face, "It's the first time for sixty years that anyone's dared to make a fool of me." The good lady was sincere; she thought there was some mystification.

At two o'clock in the morning Stravinsky, Nijinsky, Diaghilev and I piled into a taxi and drove to the Bois de Boulogne. No one spoke; the night was fresh and agreeable. We recognised the first trees by the smell of the acacias. When we had reached the Lakes, Diaghilev, enveloped in opossum furs, began to mutter in Russian; I felt Stravinsky and Nijinsky listening, and when the driver lit the lamps I saw that there were tears on the



impresario's face. He went on muttering, slowly and indefatigably. "What is it?" I asked. "Pushkin." Again there was a long silence; then Diaghilev stammered out a short sentence, and the emotion of my two companions seemed so acute that I could not refrain from interrupting in order to know the reason. "It is hard to translate," said Stravinsky, "really very hard; too Russian . . . too Russian. It means, roughly, 'Veux-tu faire un tour aux îles'—Yes, that's it; it is a very Russian expression, because, you know, in our country one goes to the islands in the same way as we are going to the Bois de Boulogne to-night, and it was in going to the islands that we conceived the 'Sacre du Printemps.'"

It was the first time the scandal had been alluded to. We came back at dawn. You cannot imagine the state of softness and nostalgia of these men, and whatever Diaghilev may have done since, I shall never forget his great wet face, in the cab, reciting "Pushkin" in the Bois de Boulogne.

It is from this meeting in the cab that our real friendship with Stravinsky dates. He went back to Switzerland. We corresponded. I had the idea of "David," and went to join him at Leysin.

An acrobat was to do the "parade" for "David," a big spectacle which was supposed to be taking place inside; a clown, who subsequently became a box, a kind of theatrical "pastiche" of the travelling phonograph, a modern equivalent of the "mask" of the ancients, was to sing through a megaphone the prowess of David and implore the public to enter to see the piece inside.

It was, in a sense, the first sketch of "Parade," but uselessly complicated by the Bible and a text.

It contained good and bad features; the idea was too fresh, too "reactive," and I congratulate myself that circumstances saved us from committing a half-blunder, worse than a blunder.

For me, it was a time of transformations. I was moulting, I was in a state of growth. It was natural that frivolity, lack of concentration and talkativeness should have been followed by an excessive desire for sobriety, method, and silence. Moreover, without knowing what the painters' opinion was, I realised thoroughly the antagonism between the genius of Igor and the "chèvre et chou" atmosphere of the Russian Ballets, and also the difficulty for an artist to concentrate within the limits of a frame so vast and encumbered with such elaborate accessories.

But my idea was not ripe.

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## THE COLLABORATION OF "PARADE"

MY DEAR FRIEND,

YOU ask me for some details about "Parade." Here are some too hastily jotted down. Excuse the style and lack of order.

Every morning fresh insults reach me, some from a long distance, for critics assail us without having seen or heard the work; and since abysses cannot be bridged, and it would be necessary to go back to the beginning and start with Adam and Eve, I considered it more dignified never to reply. I therefore peruse with an equally surprised glance articles which are insulting or contemptuous, articles in which amusement is mingled with indulgence, and congratulatory articles which are based on misunderstanding.

Before this pile of shortsightedness, crudeness, and insensibility, I think of those admirable months during which Satie, Picasso and I lovingly invented, sketched and gradually put together this little work, so pregnant, whose modesty consists precisely in not being aggressive.

I first had the idea of it during a period of "leave" in April, 1915 (I was then in the Army), on hearing Satie play his "Morceaux en forme de poire" for four hands, with Viñes. The title is misleading. A humoristic attitude, dating from Montmartre, prevents a distracted public from listening as it should to the music of the "bon maître d'Arcueil."

A kind of telepathy inspired us simultaneously with a desire to collaborate. A week later I returned to the front, leaving with Satie a bundle of notes and sketches

which were to provide him with the theme of the Chinaman, the little American girl and the acrobat (there was then only one acrobat). These indications were not in the least humorous. They emphasised, on the contrary, the prolongation of the rôle of these characters on the other side of our showman's booth. The Chinaman could there torture missionaries, the little girl go down with the "Titanic," and the acrobat win the confidences of the angels.

Gradually there came to birth a score in which Satie seems to have discovered an unknown dimension, thanks to which one can listen simultaneously both to the "Parade" and the show going on inside.

In the first version the Managers did not exist. After each music-hall turn an anonymous voice, issuing from a kind of megaphone (a theatrical imitation of the showman's gramophone, a modern variant of the "mask" of the ancients), sang a type-phrase, summing up the different aspects of the character, and opening a breach into the world of dreams. When Picasso showed us his sketches, we realised how interesting it would be to introduce, in contrast to the three chromos, unhuman or superhuman characters (a more serious transposition), who should finally assume a false reality on the stage and reduce the real dancers to the stature of puppets.

I then conceived the "Managers," wild, uncultured, vulgar and noisy, who would injure whatever they praised and arouse (as actually happened) the hatred, laughter and scorn of the crowd by the strangeness of their looks and manners. During this phase of "Parade" three actors, seated in the orchestra, announced through speaking-trumpets, as loudly as posters, the names of advertisements such as Pears Soap, etc., while the orchestra was settling down.

Subsequently in Rome, where I went with Picasso to join Leonide Massine, in order to wed scenery, costumes and choreography, I perceived that one voice alone, to represent each of Picasso's Managers, even though reinforced, jarred and constituted an intolerable error of equilibrium. We should have had to have three timbres for each manager, and that would have led us far from our principle of simplicity. It was then that we substituted for the voices the rhythm of footsteps in the silence. Nothing satisfied me so much as this silence and these stampings. Our mannikins quickly resembled those insects whose ferocious habits are exposed upon the film. Their dance was an organised accident, false steps which are prolonged and interchanged with the strictness of a fugue. The awkwardness of movement underneath those wooden frames, far from hampering the choreographer, obliged him to break with ancient formulæ and to seek his inspiration, not in things that move, but in things round which we move, and which move according to the rhythm of our steps.

At the last rehearsals the thundering and languorous horse, when the stage-carpenters had finished his badly-made carcass, was metamorphosed into the cab-horse of Fantomas. Our wild laughter and that of the stage-hands decided Picasso to let him keep this fortuitous silhouette. We couldn't have supposed that the public would receive with such bad grace one of the only concessions made to it.

We now come to the three characters of the "Parade," or rather four, since I altered the one acrobat to two, thus permitting Massine to offer a parody of an Italian "pas de deux" against the background of our realistic experiment.

Contrary to the belief of the public, these characters owe more to the Cubist school than our "managers." The managers are a sort of human scenery, animated pictures by Picasso, and their very structure necessitates a certain choreographic formula. In the case of these four characters the problem was to take a series of natural gestures and to metamorphose them into a dance without depriving them of their realistic force, as a modern painter seeks his inspiration in natural objects in order to metamorphose them into pure painting, but without losing sight of the force of their volume, substance, colour and shade.

FOR REALITY ALONE, EVEN WHEN WELL CONCEALED, HAS POWER TO AROUSE EMOTION.

The Chinaman pulls out an egg from his pig-tail, eats and digests it, finds it again in the toe of his shoe, spits fire, burns himself, stamps to put out the sparks, etc. . . .

The little girl mounts a race-horse, rides a bicycle, quivers like pictures on the screen, imitates Charlie Chaplin, chases a thief with a revolver, boxes, dances a rag-time, goes to sleep, is shipwrecked, rolls on the grass on an April morning, buys a Kodak, etc. . . .

As for the acrobats (shall I confess that the horse was ridden by a manager, and that when this manager fell off we suppressed him for good and all at the very last moment?) the poor, stupid, agile acrobats,—we tried to invest them with the melancholy of a Sunday evening after the circus when the sounding of "Lights out" obliges the children to put on their overcoats again, while casting a last glance at the "ring."

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indistinct. It yields all their grace, without pedals. It is like an inspired village band.

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I composed, said Satie modestly, a background for certain noises which Cocteau considers indispensable in order to fix the atmosphere of his characters.

Satie exaggerates, but the noises certainly played an important part in "Parade." Material difficulties, however (amongst others the suppression of the compressed air), deprived us of those "ear-deceivers,"—dynamo, Morse apparatus, sirens, express-train, aeroplane—which I employed with the same object as the "eye-deceivers"—newspapers, cornices, imitation wood-work, which the painters use.

We could hardly enable the typewriting machines to be heard.

And this is the history, though superficial and lacking in form, of a disinterested collaboration which, in spite of universal indignation, was crowned with success, the truth being that for centuries one generation has handed down a torch to another over the heads of the public, whose breath has never succeeded in extinguishing it.

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